Maximizer great for telemarketers

If you're a sales professional with access to a desktop computer in your office and a laptop computer on the road, you can now replace your well-worn address book and drawers full of paper scraps with The Maximizer.

Integration is the key to this program's usefulness. The Maximizer has seven interlinked parts: client contacts data base, "hot" list, dial-up quick access, personal records, letters, payment calculations and utilities.

The program is powerful, but requires dedication to use. I prefer a similar program — Prodex — for my day-to-day business needs.

Here are a few of the chores that The Maximizer can do:

■ Organization of clients and contacts in a data base. It can maintain single or multiple contacts within a business organization, and contacts can be grouped for direct mailings, telephone follow-ups or personal visits. An unlimited number of indexed pop-up notes can be associated with any business contact.

■ Mass mailings. A simple utili-

BUSINESS TOOLS

Hillel Segal

ty is available for writing letters and merging them with a client data base. Automatic logging keeps track of the recipients of each mailing. There are also sample letters.

■ Quick telephone access and dial-up. Four telephone numbers can be attached to any contact, so office, home, car and fax numbers can be referenced. A consolidated directory with searching facilities allows quick access to any name and number. If a modem is installed, The Maximizer will automatically dial numbers. Details about calls can be attached to notes.

There are also features for telemarketing.

■ Personal records. An open-ended appointment and planning calendar tracks appointments and describes activities. Personal fi-

nance records can be maintained with monthly or daily updates. There is also a diary option.

■ Payment calculations. Of special interest to real estate professionals, the system will calculate payments, schedules and outstanding balances for loans. There is even creative financing analysis.

Even though the program is so full-featured, it can be easily mastered, regardless of experience. Pop-up menus and data screens make it easy, and on-screen help information minimizes reliance on the user's manual. At most, the first-time user might want to get a quick survey of screen relationships from a handy reference card.

There is also a multi-user version for networks.

But The Maximizer isn't memory resident and won't "pop-up" over other programs. To use it effectively, a computer must be dedicated to running this one program, or you must go through the hassle of closing an application program and starting up The Maximizer every time you want to use it. That's why I still prefer Prodex,

which has fewer features but is a much less expensive program that can be accessed in the middle of other programs.

Another negative feature of The Maximizer is that it won't run without an expensive and heavy hard drive installed.

■ The bottom line. I keep trying various desktop organizer programs to see if any can unseat Prodex, but none has succeeded.

For professional telemarketing people who use their computer mainly for tracking clients, however, leaving a full-blown, integrated program like The Maximizer up and running all the time might suit them best.

The Maximizer is available from Pinetree Software Canada Ltd., Richmond, British Columbia for $195. For Prodex, contact Prodex Development Co., Seattle 98103. It costs $49.95.

Hillel Segal's weekly column includes evaluations of gadgets, small-computer hardware and software, seminars and books designed to enhance productivity.